

**June 23      Stagecoach Park****Geno Delafosse &  
French Rockin' Boogie**

Sponsored by Barratt American

Geno Delafosse is a true Creole – an African-American Francophone living in Louisiana -- who divides his time between being a musician and being a cowboy. As a cowboy, he breeds cattle and raises quarter horses at his Double D Ranch in the deep southwest bayou country outside Eunice, LA. His life as a musician started, well, pretty much at birth. He comes from a family of zydeco musicians, and by age seven, Geno was playing with the group. Today, he continues to perform in the same dancehalls and churches that he visited with his father's Eunice Playboys.

Awarded Best Zydeco Artist at the 2003 Big Easy Awards in New Orleans, Delafosse is highly regarded for his multi-accordion approach: he plays single-row and triple-row button accordions for a traditional "French style" Cajun sound but switches to a piano accordion (a challenging instrument that gives him the versatility to play "blue notes") for a more contemporary zydeco sound. The French Rockin' Boogie band fills out the exciting sound, with an electrified rhythm section and a corrugated metal rub-board, a zydeco staple and a crowd favorite.

Asked whether his music is zydeco or Cajun, Delafosse points out that they are not mutually exclusive styles. "I'm part of both. The conventional thinking is that if you're black, it's zydeco and if you're French, it's Cajun. But I'm black and I've got French blood too. My grandmother only spoke French, I sing in both French and English, and we cover both traditional Cajun and zydeco numbers." The breadth of the repertoire partially explains the broad appeal of this band. The rest of their popularity quickly becomes clear: in the hands of Geno Delafosse, the accordion becomes a true force of nature.

**June 30      Stagecoach Park****Emeline Michel**

The reigning Queen of Haitian song, Emeline Michel is a versatile vocalist and one of the premier Haitian songwriters of her generation. She draws from a broad palette of musical styles familiar to Haitians, including compas, twoubadou and rara. The music reflects her strong attachment to her native culture, even after years of living in France, Canada and now New York.

"Living outside your own country, it's easy to sometimes feel you've let your country down," she says. "Especially when the country is politically sinking. You carry so much love and so many beautiful things about your country that you want to put out into the world." Beloved by Haitians for combining traditional rhythms with social and inspirational comment, Michel has also garnered a wider audience, appreciative of her unique, soulful sound.

Born in Gonvailes, Haiti, Emeline's first musical experience was singing gospel music at the local church. After completing her education, she accepted an opportunity to study at the Detroit Jazz Center and returned to Haiti as a professional musician. She was soon hailed as "the new goddess of Creole music." A captivating performer, she conjures visions of Caribbean beaches with lapping surf and tropical gardens alive with birdsong. Her songs, lush with guitars, congas, and saxophones, emphasize complex themes and conscious lyrics. Through her music, Emeline Michel brings to life a world where all nationalities live together without divisive borders: "The planet is for all of us, and we should make it easy for each other."

## **July 7                      Stagecoach Park                      Rod Piazza and The Mighty Flyers**

Elwood Blues calls Rod Piazza and The Mighty Flyers “one of the great blues bands in the nation” – and TGIF Jazz audiences who heard Piazza perform last year certainly would agree. In fact, they’re STILL talking about that performance. Piazza’s brand of “West Coast Blues” -- more swinging than the down-home Delta Blues or the straight-ahead Chicago Blues -- had everyone on their feet last year at Stagecoach Park.

A W.C. Handy Award winner for Blues Instrumentalist - Harmonica, Piazza hardly needs the endorsements of critics. His harmonica technique borders on astonishing. He can spew out rippling phrases, hold and sustain piercingly high notes or equally low ones, hum, moan and groan through the instrument, or just play beautiful melodies and refrains.

Behind him are The Mighty Flyers, a genuine super-group whose peers have voted them the Blues Band of the Year twice at the annual W.C. Handy Awards in Memphis (that’s the blues equivalent of the Grammy). Rick Holmstrom is a powerful presence on guitar, as is funky pianist Honey Piazza, a devoted Otis Spann disciple and multiple W.C. Handy Award nominee -- who is also Piazza's wife. The rhythm section is rounded out by longtime drummer Steve Mugalian, who grooves in an encyclopedic variety of styles, and upright bassist Bill Stuve.

A Rod Piazza concert includes earthy originals, swingin’ jump tunes, rousing boogie-woogie numbers -- and even a slow blues ballad or two. One listen to this group and you’re sure to join the ranks of their many fans.

## **July 14                      Stagecoach Park                      Urban Jazz Coalition**

Flush with rhythmic grooves, funky bass lines, a smokin’ hot brass section, and beautifully written songs, the Urban Jazz Coalition (UJC) is a musical force to be reckoned with. UJC has performed as the opening act for top contemporary jazz artists including Spyro Gyra, Al Jarreau, Larry Carlton, Russ Freeman and The Rippingtons, Boney James, Pieces Of A Dream, and Chieli Minucci & Special EFX. The band's unique synergy of jazz, R&B, and Latin elements has been called “a blend of smooth jazz textures and fiery funk” by JAZZIZ Magazine.

The seven accomplished musicians include drummer Jim Bridges, bassist Phil Raney, guitarist Joe Gothard, keyboardist Brandon Howard, percussionist Hector Maldonado, saxophonist Keith Newton, and trumpeter Lee Savory. All have worked with a wide range of national artists. The result is a high-energy sound that frequently gets compared to the likes of Spyro Gyra or The Ohio Players. The Urban Jazz Coalition’s energetic live shows – where their impeccable musicianship combines with their infectious, on-stage chemistry – leave everyone with the same conclusion: these guys are the complete package. It’s “showtime” when they take the stage!

## **July 21                      Poinsettia Park                      Janiva Magness**

Los Angeles-based Janiva Magness is one of today’s most talented and recognized blues vocalists. Billboard writes that “Magness carves out a niche by singing the blues with maturity and sophistication.” And Singer Magazine writes, “Her voice is sultry, smoky and strong with jazz, blues, and soul textures enveloping it.”

Although singing has always come naturally for Magness, her early life wasn’t very rosy. When barely a teenager, she lost both parents to suicide and was placed in 12 different foster homes over a period of two years. At 16, Janiva became an emancipated minor, a teenage mother

with chemical dependencies who decided to put her baby up for adoption. Turmoil was a daily part of Janiva's young life.

But Magness found salvation in the form of a blistering blues guitarist named Otis Rush. She explains: "He just blew my mind. He made me feel things I didn't know what to do with. The music opened up some other place in me, like letting oxygen into a sealed crypt for the first time." The enlightened teenager started hitting blues shows throughout the Minneapolis/Chicago/Detroit triangle, listening to and singing the blues for catharsis. After discovering she could sing not only for healing but for money as well, she went to work as a backup vocalist and made a run at life as a blues musician.

It comes as no surprise that Magness is best known for her sauciness and the bold, brazen beauty of her performances. Today this 49-year-old grandmother finds herself nominated for her third consecutive Blues Music Award (formerly the W.C. Handy Awards), for Contemporary Female Artist of the Year. She won Canada's Maple Blues Award for Producer of the Year with Colin Linden for her 2005 "Bury Him at The Crossroads." Soundboard Magazine honored her with the B.B. King Award for Musical Excellence, Arizona's New Times awarded her their Critic's Choice - Blues Band of the Year Award, and she received the Jim Croce Award for Outstanding Achievement in Rhythm and Blues.

## **July 28      Poinsettia Park      Lady Dottie & The Diamonds**

A San Diego supergroup of four young, hip musicians and "one 102-year-old lady," this band doesn't perform original music, but its covers of Etta James and Aretha Franklin songs are gritty and passionate enough to sound like the real thing. The band fuses a rollicking piano with sultry stand-up bass, but the show-stealer is the Alabama-bred Dorothy Mae Whitsett – "Dottie." Her voice sounds like a combination of all the greatest blues albums ever heard. While the song selection isn't unique, the band onstage certainly is. Dottie, a voluptuous black woman, is significantly older than the men surrounding her, although the Lady rarely tells her real age. The Diamonds look like a bunch of indie-rock guys (many are) who stumbled into the wrong gig.

Originally formed by Dottie and keyboardist/co-vocalist Joe Guevara as a standard jazz duo, the group has evolved over the past few years into a full-fledged band that includes drummer Andy Robillard, guitarist Nate Beale and stand-up bassist Stephen Rey. Guevara and Dottie admit that they originally just wanted to play some corporate gigs and make some money on the side. But people started to take notice a few years ago when the band began a regular gig at the Tower Bar in City Heights. Every week, more and more people showed up. The place would get hotter, the people would get looser, everyone knew every tune.

Now the band seems content just playing the music they love. "The only time we practice is when we're playing," Dottie says. "Well, really, they all just follow me." They play 'em like they were meant to be played, broken down to the blues roots of rock 'n' roll. Take it from Dottie: "Old, young, we're all in this together. You can bring your mama to our show and she'll have a good time. Happiness shouldn't cost you a dime."

*(Adapted from articles by Seth Combs, San Diego CityBeat, and Nina Garin, San Diego Union-Tribune)*

## **August 4      Calavera Hills Park      Big Time Operator**

BTO's ninth (and probably not final) appearance at TGIF Jazz in the Parks is a record we doubt will ever be bested by any other music group. True to the past yet completely contemporary, this

ten-piece band has a look, a feel, and a totally contagious enthusiasm that is hard to beat and impossible to ignore. Year after year, they attract some of our largest audiences, sell out their cd's at intermission, and leave the crowd gasping for breath and begging for more. And it's gotten to seem like summer in Carlsbad wouldn't be complete without Mike Holguin and his son Ronnie (now 12 years old) trading drum licks on "Sing, Sing, Sing!" "He's drum section leader of the advanced band at Bernardo Heights Middle School. Can you tell that I'm very proud of him?" asks Mike, who adds, "As usual, I'm looking forward to our favorite concert of the year." (That means Carlsbad!)

San Diego's premier Big Band is led by singer Warren Lovell, who seems to channel every great crooner since Bing -- without sacrificing one degree of individuality. The other great players include Darren Plies, bass; Lynn Willard, keyboards; Scott Kyle, trombone; Dough Meeuwssen, trumpet; Steve Ebner, trumpet; Jim Weiss, alto sax and clarinet; Steve Steinberg, tenor sax and clarinet; Chuck Phillips, baritone and tenor sax, and the aforementioned Mike Holguin, drums. Five-time winners of San Diego Music Awards for Best Big Band, and recipient of the Jim Croce Excellence in Entertainment Award, Big Time Operator excels at playing classic big band arrangements, latin arrangements, and impressive original songs. Check out their website [www.bigtimeoperator.com](http://www.bigtimeoperator.com) and you'll see many photos from past TGIF concerts!

### **August 11 Calavera Hills Park Brave Combo**

For more than 26 years now, Brave Combo has boldly gone where few bands could (or would) dare to venture: Brave Combo is America's premier contemporary polka band -- and a Grammy Award-winning one at that. That's right, we said "polka band." In the same breath though, they can also be described as a ground-breaking world music act, a hot jazz quintet, a rollicking rock 'n' roll bar band, a Tex-Mex conjunto, a sizzling blues band, a saucy cocktail combo, a deadly serious novelty act, a Latin orchestra, and one of America's funkier dance bands. It's all in a night's music for Brave Combo. And if that description doesn't get you interested in hearing them...

Keyboardist, guitarist, accordionist, and singer Carl Finch founded the band in 1979. Alongside Finch for most of Brave Combo's 26 years has been multi-instrumentalist Jeffrey Barnes, known for his lively and imaginative stage wear, as well as playing an array of reeds, woodwinds, harmonica, pennywhistle, and guitars -- sometimes in multiple, simultaneous combinations. Rounding out the current line-up are trumpet and flugelhorn player Danny O'Brien, drummer Alan Emert, and Ann Marie Harrop on bass guitar.

There's a method to all their musical "madness" though. They call it "peace through polka," and although that may sound like a frivolous quip, to Brave Combo, it's really not. Through their playing, the group manages to erase musical prejudices and seduce audiences into listening to and liking music they never thought they would. "I do think the acceptance of polka and other dance rhythms can help bring about world peace. If the people of the world can start dancing together, they can learn to respect each other's cultures, too," concludes Finch. "That kind of understanding will give us all a better chance to survive."

### **August 18 Calavera Hills Park Coco Montoya**

Over the course of his 30-year career, guitarist and vocalist Coco Montoya, propelled by explosive guitar playing and a soul-driven voice, has steadily risen to the upper reaches of the blues-rock world. Montoya was born in Santa Monica in 1951 and was raised by working-class

parents – who fortunately had a large record collection. As a youngster, he enjoyed picking out notes on a guitar, but he grew up playing drums in local rock bands.

By the mid-1970s, Montoya was playing drums in several bands, one of which played a small Culver City bar on weekends. One Sunday, Albert Collins was booked to play a matinee there and the club owner gave Collins permission to use Montoya's drums. A few months later, Collins desperately needed a drummer for a tour of the Northwest and he called Montoya. "When he called," recalls Coco, "I figured we'd rehearse for a few weeks before the tour. Instead, he told me he'd pick me up in three hours." During the tour, Collins took Montoya under his wing, teaching him about the blues. Montoya learned everything he could about the "icy hot" style of blues guitar from this legendary "Master of the Telecaster." Rock 'n roll lost a drummer, and the blues gained a legend.

Five years later, when John Mayall needed a guitarist for the newly reformed Bluesbreakers, he called Coco Montoya to fill the shoes of previous Bluesbreaker guitarists Eric Clapton, Peter Green and Mick Taylor. For the next ten years he toured the world and recorded with Mayall. And like the great guitarists who came before him in the Bluesbreakers, Montoya's emergence as a scalding hot player with chops to burn suggested big things to come.

Averaging over 200 tour dates a year, nowadays Montoya packs clubs and theaters around the world. It's no coincidence that publications from The Philadelphia Daily News to Blues Revue to Living Blues to The Village Voice all rank Coco among the best guitarists and singers on the blues scene. "Montoya is at the forefront of the contemporary blues world," declared Guitar World. "He is one of the truly gifted blues artists of his generation," said Living Blues. "Powerhouse blues," exclaimed Guitar Player, "searing tone, emotional soloing, and energetic, unforced vocals... Stunning."

## **August 25 Calavera Hills Park Plena Libre**

When our producer Rob Hagey and the Arts Office staff heard this band's CD, everyone agreed they would put on a fabulous concert and be a fitting close to an extraordinary summer line-up. The 13-member Plena Libre is Puerto Rico's foremost exponent of "plena," a traditional Puerto Rican rhythm which emerged from the island's African heritage.

Combining percussion, horns and vocals, this joyous dance music has been given new life and form by Plena Libre's exciting arrangements which combine traditional plena rhythmic patterns with contemporary dance floor styles. Add an energetic stage presentation and choreographed dance steps and you have an extraordinary musical experience.

Since their start in 1994, Plena Libre has become a major force on the Puerto Rican musical scene. Under the leadership of its founder, bass player and musical director Gary Núñez, the band has been updating the traditional Afro-Rican plena genre for the past 10 years, adding a swinging horn section, timbal, piano, conga and dance floor arrangements to the panderos (hand drums) of plena. The plena rhythms are sometimes offset by surprising twists into salsa, Latin jazz, or a Brazilian samba. Instrumental colors are drawn from both the traditional and the new – the sinfonia (traditional accordion) and the Puerto Rican cuatro (small guitar-like instrument) as well as the electric and classical guitar and the trombone-centered horn section. The current lineup of Plena Libre's singers includes Grammy-winning tropical singer Wichy Camacho; veteran plenero Rafael Pole Ortiz; Plena Libre's vocalist for the past 6 years, Kaly Villanueva; and the bomba

master, Victor Velez. This three-time Grammy-nominated band is sure to take the audience on a fantastic musical journey – a great way to end another great season of music here in Carlsbad.

